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# NT 525 The Gospel of Matthew

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**ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**Department of Inductive Biblical Studies**

**The Gospel of Matthew**  
**NT 525**

**Spring 1999**

**Bauer**

**I. General Description**

This course seeks to introduce the student to the "inductive method" of biblical study, and to direct this interpretive approach to the Gospel of Matthew.

This orientation implies several things, including (1) an emphasis upon methodology and methodological concerns, and (2) a strong commitment to direct, independent study of the biblical text, with secondary sources (e.g., commentaries, grammars, dictionaries of the Bible) to be consulted by the student only after extensive, firsthand study has been completed. The English Bible (RSV/NRSV) will serve as the basis for study, but students with facility in Greek (and Hebrew) are encouraged to make use of the original whenever practicable.

**II. Course Objectives**

- A. Methodology. The emphasis will be upon the observation and interpretation of chapters/segments and individual paragraphs and verses. By the end of the course, the student should be able to do the following:
  - 1. As regards observation:
    - a. Survey books as wholes, including
      - (1) Identifying the general materials of the book (biographical, ideological, historical, etc.) and the specific materials, giving a brief title to each chapter whereby the contents of the chapter may be recalled by association;
      - (2) Locating the major units and sub-units in the book and identifying the main structural relationships operative between these units (MBS, pp. 49-55);
      - (3) Asking a few interpretive questions based upon each major structural law observed;
      - (4) Identifying the key verses and strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole;
      - (5) Locating data bearing on such higher critical questions as the author, place and date of writing, occasion for writing, recipients, etc.;
      - (6) Noting other major impressions relating to the book as a whole.
    - b. Survey of individual chapters/segments, including
      - (1) Giving a brief title to each paragraph (units) within the segment whereby its contents may be recalled by association;
      - (2) Locating the major groupings of paragraphs (units) within the segment and the main structural relationships operative between these units;
      - (3) Asking a few interpretive questions relating to each major structural relationship observed;
      - (4) Identifying the key verses or strategic areas which provide insight into the segment as a whole;
      - (5) Identifying the literary form(s) employed in the segment (MBS, pp. 68-71).  
[Some attention will also be given to the survey of divisions and sections.]

- c. Observe the details of individual paragraphs and verses, including
        - (1) Noting the important and/or difficult terms, sentence structure, and the relations between sentences and groups of sentences (MBS, pp. 39-49);
        - (2) Asking detailed interpretive questions based on these observations.
  - 2. As regards interpretation:
    - a. Answer the most significant questions raised in the observation of paragraphs and verses, including:
      - (1) Identifying the most significant questions asked, based upon importance, difficulty, and interests;
      - (2) Noting the types of evidence available for answering each interpretive question (MBS, pp. 105-66), and employing this evidence to answer each question selected.
    - b. Integrate the answers to the questions in a progressive fashion so as to synthesize first the paragraph, then the chapter/segment, and ultimately the book as a whole. This synthesis involves, inter alia, the answering of the questions raised during the surveys of segments and of books.
  - 3. As regards evaluation and application: Find the truths or principles which are transcultural, and relate them to appropriate contemporary situations.
  - 4. As regards correlation: Relate the theology of the book to the teaching of other biblical materials by the same author, to the New Testament as a whole (or, with Old Testament books, to the Old Testament as a whole), and finally to the Bible as a whole, thus moving toward a biblical theology.
- B. Content. The student should be able to do the following:
- 1. Think through the contents of the entire Gospel without reference to the printed text;
  - 2. Identify significant passages in the Gospel and interpret them contextually;
  - 3. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Gospel;
  - 4. Describe thoroughly the meaning and development of major themes in the Gospel, citing individual passages and other specific data to support conclusions;
  - 5. Discuss the historical and religious background of the First Gospel, demonstrating a general knowledge of critical problems regarding Matthew and an ability to use this historical and theological setting in the interpretation of the book.
- C. Attitude. The student should:
- 1. Appreciate the value of sound methodology for the interpretation of the biblical materials, resulting in a desire to apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
  - 2. Desire to make the Gospel of Matthew the object of intensive and creative study throughout life;
  - 3. Intend to employ seriously the Gospel by Matthew in preaching and teaching within the context of the church.

- A. Revised Standard Version of the Bible or New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
- B. Methodical Bible Study, Robert Traina
- C. Matthew, Proclamation Commentaries, Jack Dean Kingsbury
- D. Biblical Resources for Ministry, revised and enlarged edition, David R. Bauer

#### IV. Course Requirements

- A. The completion of assigned lessons in writing, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. All lessons are to be handed in at the end of the class period on the day designated. No late papers will be accepted save in cases in which permission is granted by the instructor based on emergency.
- B. Punctual attendance at all class sessions. Because of the importance of class attendance, and because of government regulations regarding student loans, a record of attendance will be taken at each class session. Absence at more than three class sessions will result in final grade penalty, and absence at more than five class sessions will result in loss of credit for the course. Exceptions may be granted based on emergency, in consultation with the instructor.
- C. A careful reading of the assigned portions of Kingsbury's "commentary" on Matthew. (pp.1-32, 96-107).
- D. A final examination based on the objectives of the course.

#### V. Course Evaluation

Assignments - 75%  
Final Exam - 25%

#### VI. Lessons

- Lesson 1. Methodology
- 1. Read Methodical Bible Study, keeping in mind the following suggestions:
    - a. Acquaint yourself sufficiently with the material to use it for reference.
    - b. Do not be concerned with footnotes or exercises.
  - 2. Write a 2-4 page summary of the book with questions that occurred to you in the course of reading.

- Lesson 2. Survey of the Gospel as a Whole.  
Read the entire Gospel through at one sitting several times.
- 1. Identify the general and specific materials of the book, giving a brief title to each chapter.
  - 2. Locate the main units and sub-units in the book, and identify the major structural relationships operative in the book as a whole.
  - 3. Ask a few interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed.
  - 4. Identify the key verses and strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance.
  - 5. Note data bearing on such higher critical questions as the author, place and date of writing, recipients, etc.
  - 6. Note other major impressions relating to the book as a whole.

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- Lesson 3. Survey of Divisions as Wholes (1:1-4:16), and Survey of Segments as Wholes (1:1-17).
- 1. Survey the division 1:1-4:16, following these steps:

- a. Locate the main units and sub-units within the division, and the major structural relationships operative.
  - b. Ask a few interpretive questions based on each major structural relationship observed.
  - c. Identify the key verses or strategic areas which provide insight into the division as a whole.
  - d. Note other major impressions relating to the division as a whole.
2. Survey the segment 1:1-17, following these steps:
- a. Give a brief title to each paragraph whereby its contents may be recalled by association.
  - b. Locate the main units and sub-units within the segment and the major structural relationships operative.
  - c. Ask a few interpretive questions based on each major structural relationship observed.
  - d. Identify the key verses or strategic areas which provide insight into the segment as a whole.
  - e. Identify the literary form(s) employed in the segment.
  - f. Note other major impressions relating to the segment as a whole.

Lesson 4. Survey of Segments as Wholes. 1:18-2:23.  
Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments found in Lesson 3 to 1:18-2:23.

Lesson 5. Survey of Segments as Wholes. 3:1-4:16.  
Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments to 3:1-4:16.

Lesson 6. Survey of Divisions as Wholes. 4:17-16:20.  
Apply the suggestions for the survey of divisions as wholes found in Lesson 3 to 4:17-16:20.

Lesson 7. Survey of Segments as Wholes. Segment containing 5:46-48.  
Identify the segment of which 5:46-48 is a part, and do a survey of this segment, following the suggestions for the survey of segments in Lesson 3.

Lesson 8. Detailed Observation. 5:46-48.

1. Examine 5:46-48 in terms of a detailed observation. Do independent study only. Use MBS, pp. 31-36, 40-49, 72-79 as a guide. Ask interpretive questions relating to each observation made. Keep the following suggestions in mind:
  - a. At this stage, experiment with the two-column format shown in MBS as a means of recording your observations and questions.
  - b. Number observations, and give verse references. You may find it useful to begin by copying the text.
  - c. Avoid limiting observations to grammatical analysis.
  - d. Keep interpretation at a minimum, and be able to distinguish between observation and interpretation.
  - e. If you can, make use of the original language.
  - f. Make note of major problems that arise as you proceed.
2. Identify the most significant questions raised.

Lesson 9. Interpretation. 5:46-48.  
Use the exegetical determinants outlined in MBS, pp. 135-65, to interpret 5:46-48. Interpret the passage by selecting two or three of the most important questions raised in your detailed

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observation of the passage and by employing the exegetical determinants to answer these questions.

1. Attempt to determine which exegetical determinants are relevant to the question being answered.

2. Begin with the most important determinants, and try to bring their evidence to bear on the interpretive question being answered.
3. Using inferential reasoning, indicate the possible conclusion or conclusions to which each piece of evidence points. These conclusions, or inferences, should point toward possible answers to the interpretive question. At the close of study, list the various pieces of evidence; if more than one is possible, indicate the data supporting each possibility. If evidence is conclusive, indicate your conclusion.
4. Make periodical summaries of your findings.
5. Identify the major problems of methodology as you proceed.
6. Keeping in mind that the last exegetical determinant to be examined is secondary sources, after independent study check at least two secondary sources. Be sure to identify each commentary or other secondary source used.

#### Lesson 10.

Survey and Interpretation. 8:1-9:35.

1. Survey. Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments to 8:1-9:35.
2. Interpretation.
  - a. Investigate the nature of Jesus' authority in this segment by answering the following questions. Over what does Jesus exercise authority? How is this authority described? Why has Matthew presented Jesus' authority in this way? What are the implications?
  - b. What is the meaning of "faith" in this segment?
  - c. Examine Matthew's portrait of the disciples and discipleship in 8:1-9:35 by answering the following questions: What does it mean to be a disciple? How does one become a disciple? What are the requirements of discipleship?
  - d. Note the titles and names that are applied to Jesus in this segment. What is the meaning and function of each?
3. Synthesis.
  - a. In one short paragraph, summarize the major thrust of 8:1-9:35
  - b. How does this segment relate to chs. 5-7? Why has Matthew thus related these two units?

#### Lesson 11.

Survey and Interpretation. 9:35-11:1.

1. Survey. Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments to 9:35-11:1.
2. Interpretation.
  - a. Analyze what is herein said regarding the ministry of the disciples, i.e., what are the main elements in the description of the disciples ministry in this passage, and what is the meaning of each? Does this description refer to the ministry of the disciples during Jesus' earthly existence, to the ministry of the post-Easter disciples, or both? Why?
  - b. What is the relationship between the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the disciples as set forth in 9:35-11:1? Be analytical.
3. Synthesis.
 

Summarize the portrait of discipleship in 9:35-11:1, and relate this portrait to the understanding of discipleship in 8:1-9:35.

#### Lesson 12.

Survey of Segments as Wholes. 11:1-30.

Apply the Suggestions for the Survey of Segments to 11:1-30.

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#### Lesson 13.

Detailed Observation. 11:28-30.

Using the two-column format, do a detailed observation of 11:28-30. Identify the most significant questions raised.

- Lesson 14. Interpretation. 11:28-30.  
Using the two-column format, interpret 11:28-30. Identify the most significant questions raised.
- Lesson 15. Survey of segments as wholes. 13:1-52. Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments to 13:1-52.
- Lesson 16. Interpretation 13:1-52.
1. Identify the structure of each parable. Interpret each parable using relevant interpretive determinants (including structure of parable itself, context, etc.). Be especially careful to show the relationship between the structure of each parable and its interpretation. As a result of your study, attempt to state the message of each parable in a sentence or two.
  2. Analyze the meaning and function of vv. 10-17 and vv. 34-35 within the flow of ch. 13.
- Lesson 17. Survey and Interpretation. 15:1-39.
1. Survey. Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments to 15:1-39.
  2. Interpretation.
    - a. What was the nature and origin of the "tradition of the elders?" What views of religion underlie this understanding of purification? In light of 15:1-20, how is Jesus' view of religion different from that of the scribes and Pharisees?
    - b. Trace Jesus' answer in vv. 3-9. What are the main elements of the answer? How does this response answer the question of the Pharisees in v. 2?
    - c. Analyze the miracle story of 15:21-28. Interpret vv. 25-28. How does this story relate to the material at the beginning of ch. 15?
  3. Synthesis.  
Summarize Jesus' views of religious practice according to this segment.
- Lesson 18. Survey of Segments as wholes. 16:1-20. Apply the suggestions for the Survey of Segments to 16:1-20.
- Lesson 19. Detailed Observation. 16:18-19.  
Using the two column format, do a detailed observation of 16:18-19. Identify the most significant questions raised.
- Lesson 20. Interpretation. 16:18-19.  
Interpret 16:18-19 by answering a significant question from your detailed observation.
- Lesson 21. Evaluation and Application. 16:18-19.
1. Evaluation. Having interpreted Mt. 16:18-19, evaluate the passage in order to determine what relevance it has for you, for your ministry, and for the people to whom you will minister.
  2. Application. Ask a series of applicatory questions on the basis of your evaluation of this passage. In light of your circumstances (and the circumstances of those under your ministry), how would you answer these questions?
- Lesson 22. Survey of Divisions as Wholes (16:21-28:20), and Survey of Segments as Wholes (16:21-17:23).  
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1. Apply the suggestions for the survey of divisions as wholes found in Lesson 3 to 16:21-28:20.
  2. Apply the suggestions for the survey of segments to 16:21-17:27.
- Lesson 23. Detailed Observation. 16:24-28.  
Using the two-column format, do a detailed observation of 16:24-28.  
Identify the most significant questions raised.

- Lesson 24. Interpretation. 16:24.  
Interpret 16:24 by answering a significant question from your detailed observation.
- Lesson 25. Survey and Interpretation. 17:24-18:35.
1. Survey.
  2. Interpretation.
    - a. What is the meaning of 17:24-27? What does its inclusion here imply regarding the situation of Matthew's church? Explore the relation of 17:24-27 to ch. 18.
    - b. What main issues are addressed in ch. 18, and what is the specific meaning and significance of each?
    - c. Interpret the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (18:23-35) and relate it to the preceding material in this segment. Be specific, precise, and penetrating.
  3. Synthesis.
    - a. Summarize the teaching of 17:24-18:35.
    - b. How does this segment relate to its surrounding context?
- Lesson 26. Survey and Interpretation. 19:1-20:34.
1. Survey
  2. Interpretation.
    - a. What problem is raised in each paragraph, and how does Jesus deal with each problem?
    - b. Interpret 19:21.
    - c. What is the meaning of the parable of the laborers (20:1-16)? What is its function in this context?
    - d. What are the main emphases found in the third announcement of the cross [and resurrection] (20:17-19)? How is this announcement related to its context? Compare this third announcement with the first and second announcements of the cross and resurrection (16:21; 17:22-23)?
  3. Synthesis.  
Contrast Jesus and the disciples in this segment. How does this contrast relate to the contrast between Jesus and the disciples in the preceding material, especially 16:21-17:27?
- Lesson 27. Evaluation and Application. 19:21.  
Evaluate and apply 19:21.
- Lesson 28. Survey and Interpretation. Mt. 21:1-22:45.  
Apply the principles of survey, analysis, and synthesis to this section. Analyze your methodology and identify and problems you encounter in the course of study.
- Lesson 29. Survey and Interpretation. Mt. 24-25.
1. Survey.
  2. Interpretation.

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- a. What is the meaning of the disciples' question in 24:4? Trace Jesus' response to the question. How does Jesus answer the question and why does he answer their question in this way?
- b. What are the major emphases of the parables in 25:1-46? What is the relationship between ch. 24 and ch. 25? Keeping in mind the flow of the story, why did Jesus speak these parables to his disciples at this point?
3. Synthesis.



- a. Summarize the major emphases of chs. 24-25.
- b. Investigate the relationship between these chapters and their surrounding context.

- Lesson 30.      Synthesis of Method.  
Employ the steps of observation, interpretation, evaluation and application in relation to 27:55-28:20.
1.      Observation.
    - a.      Survey the segment Mt. 27:55-28:20.
    - b.      Do detailed observation of 28:18-20. Identify the most significant questions raised.
  2.      Interpretation. Interpret 28:18-20 by answering one or two of the most significant questions raised in your detailed observation.
  3.      Evaluation and Application. Evaluate and apply 28:18-20.
  4.      Self-Analysis. Critically evaluate your own methodology. Identify points of strength and weakness. What major problems remain in your mind regarding methodology?

- Lesson 31.      Synthesis of Content.
1.      What are the broad contours of Matthew's portrait of Jesus? That is, what is the christology of Matthew? Give evidence to support your conclusions (including verse references).
  2.      What are the main concerns of the teachings of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel? Include discussion of the kingdom of heaven, discipleship, and the law.
  3.      What is Matthew's understanding of salvation history? Discuss Matthew's views regarding the relationship between the time of the prophets, of John the Baptist, of Jesus, of the church, and the parousia.

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**Major German commentaries include those by Gaechter, Gnllka, Lohmeyer, Sand, Schlatter, and Zahn. Major French commentaries include Benoit, Bonnard, Lagrange, and Sabourin.**